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THE RUINS IN SOUTH CENTRAL AFRICA.

THE Royal Geographical Society, aided by a grant from the British Association, is sending Mr Theodore Bent, well known as an archaeologist and explorer in Asia Minor and the Greek Islands, to investigate the remarkable ruins in South Central Africa, of unknown date, supposed by the older geographers to be the remains of the palace of the Queen of Sheba. These ruins, generally known as those of Zimbabye, are situated in Mashonaland, about one hundred and fifty miles west of Sofala, and were occupied, at the time of the Portuguese expedition into the interior in 1506, by a people denominated by them Moors, but who appear to have been Arabs, reigning over a subject race of Kaffirs, probably the ancestors of the present dwellers in that region; but the dominant race, the Moors of the Portuguese, have apparently disappeared, although some modern explorers trace them in a yellow race found farther in the interior.

The Portuguese historians were loud in their praise of these ruins; but in one of their expeditions, Zimbabye, having been evacuated by its then inhabitants, was taken by Baretto, the Portuguese commander, sacked, and burnt. After this, nothing was heard of it until it was re-discovered and described by the German traveller, Carl Mauch, in 1871. Mauch, however, was not allowed to explore the ruins, which are regarded as sacred by the natives; but he made sketches of one or two portions of them, which were reproduced by his friend Thomas Baines, the well-known traveller, in his book entitled 'Gold Regions of South-eastern Africa' (1877). Baines' account excited some interest at the time; but the difficulties and dangers attending explorations in these remote districts prevented travellers from following up the discovery, and the matter was allowed to fall into oblivion until now, when the expedition of the Chartered Company of British South Africa has once more opened up and made

practicable a route to these interesting remains of an ancient civilisation.

Zimbabye as described, is an extensive mass of ruins, covering the western slope of a granite hill, and extending across a plain for about three hundred yards, where stands another mass of ruins upon an elevated terrace. As far as can be traced, these ruins consist of labyrinthine walls one within another, often terminating in a 'cul de sac,' and enclosing in one part a conical tower still thirty feet high, to which no entrance has been discovered, although, perhaps, there may be one, partly buried beneath the débris. These buildings would appear to have formed a strong fortress, impregnable before the introduction of cannon, the entrances being so constructed that only one person could approach at a time, and being then always fully exposed to the arrows of the garrison.

There are many other peculiarities in the construction of these buildings deserving of notice: in one part projecting stones stand out from the wall, as though originally supporting a staircase or gallery; and these stones, which are very hard and of a dark greenish-black colour, are ornamented with a pattern of diamonds and wavy lines; then one of the most perfect of the walls has a frieze of zigzag pattern, formed of very thin slabs of hewn stone, let into the wall about twenty-five feet from the ground, on the south-eastern side only; whilst the whole of the walls, towers, and other structures are built of blocks of granite hewn into the shape of bricks, but a little larger, and put together without mortar, the walls being often ten feet thick at the base, and about seven or eight at the top. But remarkable as are the ruins of Zimbabye, they do not stand alone, but appear to be connected by a chain of forts with a similar mass of ruins near Tatì, fully three hundred miles farther to the west, so exactly similar in structure, design, and ornamentation, as to leave no doubt whatever that they were the work of the same people; whilst similar masses of ruins are reported near Manica, and also in the Transvaal east of the Nylstroom.

The whole of these are built of hewn granite blocks, the size of bricks, and without mortar; and when we consider the immense amount of labour this would entail, we may be certain that the builders must have been very numerous, quite settled in the country, and far advanced in civilisation. They were not Portuguese, who never occupied the country in sufficient force to execute these great works, and whose early historians have testified to their existence at the time of their first expedition. They are wholly unlike the work of any known Kaffir race, as none of these ever construct stone buildings, and certainly never hew stones into shape for building purposes. Neither do they appear to resemble Arab structures; nor is there anything sufficiently distinctive to indicate a Phoenician origin, although the latter is the idea which seems to have occupied the minds of most travellers in these regions, for various native names, such as the Sabia River, and many peculiar manners and customs, have caused this land to be regarded as the Ophir of the Bible, the golden land whence Solomon drew the gold and ivory for the Temple of Jerusalem, and whence the Queen of Sheba came to see and judge for herself of the wisdom of which she had heard.

Whatever people may have been the builders of these wonderful structures in the heart of savage Africa, it is quite certain that they were attracted thither by gold, and that these masses of masonry were constructed partly for the protection of the miners, and partly for storing and extracting the precious metal. In the immediate neighbourhood of every one of these forts old workings abound, and near Tati they are met with in thousands; whilst in several of the rooms of the forts furnaces have been found for extracting the metal; the only objects met with besides being very coarse pottery, and stone basins with round stones, such as are still used by the Kaffirs for crushing corn, but which, from their much worn appearance, may also have been used for crushing ore after it had been roasted in the furnaces. It is said that the Kaffirs guarded these places jealously because they found there implements of value; but no modern explorer has ever found any object of metal either among the ruins or in the old workings, which latter consist of shafts, sometimes of great depth, and very skilfully constructed; neither has any inscription been found or other ethnological guide to date. Yet there are stories of inscriptions which formerly existed, and it is to be hoped that Mr Bent may come across something of the kind in his excavations.

That the buildings have been entirely abandoned for centuries is demonstrated by the fact that they are generally overgrown with dense bush, whilst everywhere trees of great size and probably two or three centuries old have forced their way through the walls. Mr Bent is inclined to attribute these remains to the Persians, in the reign of Chosroes II., in the seventh century of the present era; but the brilliant reign of that monarch seems far too short to allow of the works represented by these ruins; and after his death, Persia was in too chaotic a condition to allow of the maintenance of so remote a colony with its necessarily large garrison.

Failing Arabs and Persians, we are thrown

back upon the old Phoenician hypothesis for the origin of these remarkable buildings. It is very evident that Hiram, king of Tyre, had some one well-known dépôt, from which he drew his supply of precious metals, his ivory, and his almuñ trees, and starting from Ezion-Gebir, on the Red Sea, he would be quite as likely to sail along the coast of Africa as far south as Sofala, which from time immemorial has been a gold port, as to sail eastward to India, which has been the rival of Africa as the Ophir of Scripture. The Queen of Sheba has always been regarded as an African potentate, and it would be reasonable to suppose that she would have heard of the wealth and wisdom of Solomon from the merchants who from Tyre sought gold within her dominions, whilst the gold fleet would provide her with the necessary means of transport. It is not a little noteworthy that in this part of Africa there are still several female sovereigns, one of whom, Majaja, has recently submitted to the Boers of the Transvaal, whilst in all other parts of Africa men are the rulers. It is of course possible that the fleets of Hiram and Solomon may have visited both India and Africa in search of treasure; but in any case, the expedition of Mr Bent will be watched with keen interest, as likely to set at rest a controversy which has occupied the minds and the pens of the learned for many generations.

It may be of interest to note that the old Portuguese writers especially notice that rice, millet, and cotton were cultivated by the natives of this region on their first discovery, as well as various fruits, such as oranges, lemons, vines, pineapples, figs, and the sugar-cane; and these the most recent explorers describe as still growing wild. 'Fancy,' says one of the pioneers, 'riding for miles and miles under the shade of wild orange trees, branches weighed down with fruit, and more of others than I can name, wild grapes, guavas, limes, plums, apples, and pomegranates—a veritable garden of Eden.'

As these fruits are not supposed to be indigenous in Africa, and were evidently not introduced by the Portuguese, who found them there, they may perhaps form a clue to the civilised builders of Zimbabwe.

DUMARESQ'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER XIV.—RACK AND THUMBCREW.

HAVILAND DUMARESQ sat long on the bank, with his head in his hands, sobbing like a child. Then he rose wearily, and plodded home alone, his head aching and his heart heavy at the downfall of that mad momentary opium dream for his beloved Psyche.

Without and within, indeed, the day had changed. Dull weather was springing up slowly from the west, where the sun had buried itself behind a rising fog-bank. The philosopher made his way, with stumbling steps, across the open downs—those prosaic downs so lately mountains—and lifting the latch of the garden gate, entered the house and walked aimlessly into his bare little study.

A dozen books lay open on the plain deal table

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—books of reference for the subject at which he was just then working—a series of papers on mathematical and astronomical questions for the ‘Popular Instructor.’ He sat down in his place and tried to compose. It was for bread, for bread, for bread, for Psyche. But even that strong accustomed spur could not goad him on to work this dreary afternoon. He gazed vacantly at the accusing sheet of virgin-white foolscap: not a thought surged up in that teeming brain; not a picture floated before those dim inner eyes; he couldn’t fix himself for moment upon the declination of Alpha Centauri: with all the universe of stars and nebulae and constellations and systems careering madly in wild dance around him to the music of the spheres, his mind came back ever to one insignificant point in space, on the surface of that petty planet he so roundly despised—the point occupied by a tiny inconspicuous organic result of cosmic energies, by name Psyche. At last he flung down his pen in despair, and opening the door halfajar in his hand, called up the stairs to her, ‘Psyche, Psyche, Psyche.’

‘Yes, Papa,’ Psyche answered, jumping up at the call from the tiny couch in her own bedroom, and running down the steep and narrow cottage staircase. ‘You weren’t in for lunch, I was so sorry. You’ve had one of those horrid headaches again, I’m sure. I can tell it by your eyes. I see the pupils look so big and heavy.’

Haviland Dumaresq drew one palm across his forehead, and gazed hard at his daughter’s eyes in return. Though she had bathed them well in cold water, they still bore evident traces of crying. ‘My darling,’ he said, laying his hand on her shoulder with tender care, and drawing her over caressingly to the one armchair in that bare little workshop, ‘something’s been troubling you too. You’re not yourself at all to-day, I can see. You look pale and troubled.—Psyche, we two have never had secrets from one another up to this: don’t let’s begin to have any now. Tell me what it is. Tell me what’s worrying my dear little daughter.’ He spoke wistfully.

Psyche gazed up at him half doubtful for a moment; then she answered with a flush: ‘You can read everything. You know already what it is, father.’

Dumaresq, trembling, took her little hand in his and stroked it tenderly. ‘We must expect it so now,’ he said in an undertone, as if half to himself, with dreamy persistence—‘we must expect it so, now, I suppose: the Epoch has come for it. In the essentially artificial state of society in which we human atoms now live and move and have our being, feelings that are natural at certain turns of life as song to the bird or play to the kitten must be sternly repressed at Society’s bidding; and they can only be suppressed by being turned inward; they must find vent at last, if in nothing else, in these hysterical longings, and tears, and emotions. I must expect them all, no doubt; I must expect these outbursts. But it’s hard to see them, for all that, however inevitable. My little girl has been crying—alone. It wrings my heart to see her eyes so red. Psyche, Psyche, you must try to dismiss it.’

‘I can’t,’ Psyche answered, making no attempt to conceal the subject that floated uppermost in both their thoughts. Father and daughter were too nearly akin to allow of any flimsy pretences

between them. ‘I can’t dismiss it—and, Papa, I don’t want to.’

‘Not for *my* sake, Psyche?’ he asked sadly.

The girl rose, the peach-blossom flush in her cheek now more crimson than ever, and flinging herself wistfully on her father’s shoulder, answered without faltering, or sobbing, or crying: ‘Anything but *that*, father; anything on earth but that; for *your* sake, anything; but *that*, never!’

The old man disengaged her softly from his neck, and seating her down in the big armchair, where she let her face hang, all shame and blushes, without venturing to raise her eyes to his, surveyed her long and anxiously in pitying silence. Then he cried at last, clasping his hands tight: ‘I didn’t think it had gone as far as *this*, my darling. If I’d dreamt it was going as far as this, I’d have spoken and warned you long ago, Psyche!’

‘It hasn’t gone far at all, Papa,’ Psyche answered truthfully. ‘It hasn’t begun even. It’s all within. I don’t so much as know’—she paused for a moment, then she added in a very low tone, tremulously—‘whether he cares the least little bit in the world for me.’

‘It *has* gone far,’ the old man corrected with a very grave air: ‘far, far, too far—in your own heart, Psyche. And your own heart is all I care about. I ought to have foreseen it. I ought to have suspected it. I ought to have guarded my treasure, my beautiful treasure in an earthen vessel, far more carefully. What matters is not whether *he* cares for you, but that you should care at all for *him*, my darling.’

Psyche looked down and answered nothing.

‘You think yourself in love with him,’ her father went on, accenting the *think* with a marked emphasis.

‘I never said so,’ Psyche burst out, half defiantly.

Dumaresq took a little wooden chair from the corner by the window, and drawing it over by Psyche’s side, seated himself close to her and laid her passive hand in his with fatherly gentleness. Psyche’s blank eyes looked straight in front of her. The philosopher, gazing down, hesitated and reflected half a minute. Stars and worlds are such calculable bodies to deal with: they move along such exactly measurable orbits: but a woman!—who shall tell what attractions and repulsions deflect her from her course? who shall map out her irregular and irresponsible movements? And since the last six weeks or so, Psyche was a woman. She had found out her own essential womanhood with a burst, as girls of her type always do—at the touch of a man’s hand. Her father gazed at her in doubt. How to begin his needful parable?

At last words came. ‘My darling,’ he said very slowly and gravely, ‘you are all I have left to care for in the world, and I love you, Psyche, as no man ever yet loved his daughter. You are all the world to me, and the rest is nothing. Looking back upon my own past life, I don’t attempt to conceal from myself for a moment the fact that, as a man, I have been a failure—an utter failure. The failure was a splendid one, I frankly admit; nay, more, perhaps, a failure worth making—for one man, once in the world’s history—but none the less, for all

that, an utter failure.—No, don't interrupt me, my child, for I know what I'm saying. Am I a man to palter with the truth or to hide from myself my own great weaknesses? Have I not taken my own gauge like all other gauges—accurately, and dispassionately? From beginning to end, my life has been all wrong; an error from the outset: like the universe itself, a magnificent blunder. Not that I regret it; I regret nothing. I am myself, not any other. I must follow out the law of my own being unopposed, though it bring me in the end nothing but blank disappointment.'

He paused a moment, and ran his hand abstractedly through her long fair hair: then he went on again in a soft musing undertone. 'But you, Psyche, it is for you to profit by my sad experience. I have learned once for all, myself vicariously for all our race—learned in a hard school, a hard lesson, to be transmitted from me to every future Dumaresq, for individuality runs too strong in the current of our blood—learned that the world is right, and that the individual does unwisely and ill to cast himself away for the sake of humanity. Humanity will owe him no thanks for his sacrifice. My child, I want you to be happy—happy—happier far than ever I have been. I could never bear to see you condemned to a life of drudgery. I want you to be all that I have missed. I want you to be what I could never have been. I want you to be comfortable—at your ease—happy.'

Psyche caught at his meaning by pure hereditary sympathy. She glanced back at him with her proud free face, tenderly, indeed, but almost reproachfully. How could he ever think it of her? 'Papa,' she said in a very firm voice, 'I am your daughter. Individuality, as you say, runs strong in the blood. As you are, I am. But being the actual man you are yourself—why, how can you ever expect your daughter to be any otherwise?'

'You despise money too much, Psyche,' the old man said, in a tone of conviction.

'Do you despise it?' Psyche answered simply with a straight home-thrust. 'Papa, you know you do—as much as I do.'

Haviland Dumaresq's lips half relaxed in spite of himself. 'True,' he replied; 'very true, little one. But then I'm a man. I can bear all that—poverty, drudgery, misery. I know what it means. Whereas you, my darling—'

'I am your daughter,' Psyche repeated proudly.

'Then you mean,' her father said in a heart-broken voice, 'that if he asks you, you mean to marry Mr Linnell?'

'He hasn't asked me,' Psyche answered with a deeper flush.

'But if he does, Psyche—my darling, my daughter, promise me, oh promise me, that you'll give him no answer till you've spoken to me about it.'

Psyche looked him back in the eyes sorrowfully. 'I can't,' she answered, faltering. 'Oh, anything but that, Papa. I didn't know it myself even till you began to ask me. But I know it now. I love him, I love him too dearly.'

Dumaresq looked at her with melting regret. 'My child,' he said, faltering in his turn, 'you

will break my heart for me. Psyche, I've had but one day-dream in my life—one long day-dream that I've cherished for years for you. I've seen you growing up and unfolding like a flower-bud, becoming every day sweeter and daintier and more beautiful than ever, flitting like a butterfly through this dull gray life of mine—and I've said to myself in my own heart: "If I've nothing else to give my child, I can give her at least the dower of being Haviland Dumaresq's only daughter. I can introduce her to a world where my name at any rate counts for something. There, she will be noticed, admired, courted: there, her beautiful face and her beautiful soul will both be rated at their true value. There, some man who is worthy of her, by birth and position, will make her happy, as she richly deserves to be." I saw you in my own mind surrounded by comfort, honour, luxury. That was my day-dream, Psyche, the only day-dream of my sad long life. Don't break it down ruthlessly for me, I beseech you, by marrying a penniless man, who will drag you by slow degrees of decline, down, down, down, to poverty, drudgery, wretchedness, misery. —Don't let me see you a pale careworn wife, harassed with debt, and many children, and endless rounds of household worries. Don't break my heart by spoiling your own life for me.—Oh, for my sake, Psyche, promise me, do promise me, for the present to say *no* to him.'

'Papa, Papa,' Psyche cried, 'you've said it yourself; if you've nothing else on earth to give me, you've given me the dower of being Haviland Dumaresq's daughter. I've always been proud of your own grand life, and of the way you've flung it so grandly away for humanity. Do you think I'm not proud enough to fling my own away too—for love? I'd rather bear drudgery with the one man I care for, than share wealth and position and titles and honours with any other man in all England.'

Her father gazed down at her with remorseful eyes. He was proud of her, but heart-broken. 'You're very young, Psyche,' he murmured again, holding both her hands in his, and pleading hard for his day-dream. 'You're only beginning your course through life. You'll meet many other men in your way through the world whom you can love as truly as you love Linnell. This is but the first slight scratch. Don't fancy, as girls will do, it's the deepest of wounds, the one grand passion. You'll find penniless young painters as are plentiful as blackberries on your path through life. I've seen women marry before now for pure, pure love; and marry a man who loved them truly; yet lead such lives, such unhappy lives of sordid shifts and squalid household tasks, that all the romance—yes, and all the health and strength and spirit too, was crushed clean out of them. Don't rush headlong at once on such a fate as that. Wait a while, my child; I ask you no more: just a brief delay: wait and make your mind up.'

He meant it in the kindest possible way—the way of fathers; but he had mistaken his hearer. Psyche looked up at him with a great fact dawning ever clearer on her half-childish understanding. She had realised it but dimly and uncertainly before; she saw it now, under stress of opposition, in all its vivid and undeniable distinctness. 'Papa,' she cried, with profound

conviction, 'I may wait, and wait, as long as you like, but I shall love him, for ever, and him only.'

He had forced it out of her. He had forced it into her almost. Without the spur of his searching questions, she could never have put it so plainly, even to herself. But she knew it now. She was quite certain of it. She saw it as a simple fact of Nature. She loved Linnell, and she was not ashamed of it. She had forgotten by this time all her girlish bashfulness—her modesty—her reserve—and she looked her father full in the face as she repeated fervently: 'I love him! I love him!'

The old man flung himself back in his chair with a groan. 'Psyche, Psyche,' he cried, 'you'll kill me—you'll kill me. Was it for this I longed and dreamed in secret? Was it for this I worked and flung my life away? You'll bring down my gray hairs in sorrow to the grave. To see you drudging as a poor man's slave in some wretched lodging! For your father's sake, oh, take pity on yourself—refuse him, refuse him!'

'I can't,' Psyche answered firmly—'I can't do it, Papa. My tongue wouldn't obey me. He hasn't asked me yet, and for your sake I hope he won't ask me; but if he does, I can't refuse him; I must say yes; I can never say no to him.'

Her father rocked himself to and fro in his chair in speechless misery. If Psyche were to marry that penniless painter he would feel that his life was indeed a failure. His house would in truth be left unto him desolate. The ground would be cut from under his very feet. He had dreamed his dream of happiness for Psyche so long that he had come to live on it now altogether. It was his future, his world, his one interest in existence. It had intertwined itself alike in his opium ecstasies and in his soberer, sorer, waking hours, till each form of the dream had only seemed to heighten and fortify the other. And now Psyche, for whose sake he had dreamt it all, was going herself deliberately to crush his hopes under foot by flinging herself away, and accepting that penniless, struggling painter!

He rocked himself to and fro in his chair with tears in his eyes. They rolled slowly down his weather-beaten cheek, and Psyche, watching them, let her own keep them company in solemn silence. One heart or the other must surely break. Which heart should it be? that was the question. Big drops stood upon the old man's brow. It was clear the disappointment wrung his very soul. The opium-fever made him see things ever in extremes. If Linnell wasn't rich, then Linnell was a beggar, and would drag down his Psyche to the grave or the workhouse. His agony stood out visibly in every line of his face. At last Psyche could stand the sight no longer. She flung herself upon him with tears and sobs. 'Papa,' she cried piteously, 'my dear, darling father; I love you, I love you, very, very dearly!'

'I know it, Psyche,' the old man answered in heart-broken tones, with his hand on his heart—'I know it; I know it.'

'Ask me anything but that, Papa,' Psyche burst out, all penitent, 'and I'll gladly do it.'

The philosopher smoothed her fair hair with his

hand. 'Psyche,' he murmured once more, after a long pause, 'he's coming to-morrow to finish the picture. After that, I believe, he's not coming again. I think—he's going away altogether from Petherston.'

Psyche's face was as white as a ghost's. 'Well, Papa?' she asked, in a voice that trembled audibly with a quivering tremor.

'Well, I want you to do one thing for me,' her father went on, 'one thing only. I won't ask you to give him up: not to give him up entirely. I see that's more than I could ask of you at present. The wound has gone too deep for the moment. But young hearts heal much faster than old ones. I do ask you, therefore, to wait and think. Remember how young you are! You're only seventeen. In four years more, you'll be your own mistress. If in four years from now you love Linnell still, and he loves you still—then well and good—though it break my heart, I will not oppose you. Even now, my darling, I do not oppose you. I only say to you—and I beg of you, I implore you—wait and try him.'

Psyche looked back at him, cold and white as marble. 'I will wait, Papa,' she answered, in a very clear voice. 'I can wait, if you wish it. I can wait, and wait, and wait for ever. But four years or forty years, I shall always love him.'

Dumaresq smiled. That's the way with the young. The present love is to them always the unalterable one. 'If you'll wait for my sake,' he said, holding her hand tight, 'I'll let you do as you will in four short years. In three years even: I'll give you law. You're young, very young. I never thought these things had come near you yet. If I had thought so, I'd have guarded you better, far better. But I want you to promise me now one other thing—say nothing of all this to Linnell to-morrow.'

'Papa!' Psyche cried, rising in her horror. 'Am I to let him go away without even saying good-bye to him? without bidding him farewell? without telling him how sorry I am to lose him, and why—why I must be so terribly different now to him? Suppose he asks me, what must I answer him?'

'My child,' the old man said in a soothing voice, 'he will not ask you. He'll pass it by in silence. But for my sake, I beg you, I beseech you, I implore you—try to say nothing to him. Let him go in peace. Oh, Psyche, don't break my poor old heart for me outright! I'm an old man: a broken-down man. If I have time, perhaps I may get over this blow. But give me time! I'm very feeble. Worn out before my day. Let him go to-morrow without telling your whole heart to him.'

Psyche stood still and answered nothing.

'Will you?' her father asked once more imploringly.

Psyche, white as a sheet, still held her peace.

'For Heaven's sake, promise,' the old man cried again, with an agonised look. It was crushing his heart. He couldn't bear to think that Linnell should drag her down to those imagined depths of bohemian poverty.

The poor girl gazed at him with a fixed cold face. She looked more like a marble statue than a human figure as she stood there irresolute.

The heart within her was divided two ways, and frozen hard with horror. But her father's attitude moved her to despair. He was an old man, as he said, and to refuse him now would clearly be his death-warrant. 'I promise,' she murmured slowly, and stood there rooted. Three years, three years; three long, long years! and she dared not even so much as tell him.

DO PARROTS THINK?

I SUPPOSE all animals must think after their own fashion, but I do not now propose to debate or gauge their general mental powers; my question refers to the use of phrases caught up by birds in their captivity, especially parrots. As regards these, it is just possible that we have been too ready to speak of 'parrot-like repetition,' and in assuming that the birds never attach any meaning to the sounds they utter. In spite of this being the accepted theory, there has always been a great fondness for stories in which there appears an application of such phrases as seem to be beyond coincidence. One of the oldest and, I fear most apocryphal of such anecdotes, proves this. We all know how Queen Elizabeth's or somebody else's parrot fell into the Thames, was rescued by a waterman, and on the man demanding a larger reward than was thought befitting, and a dispute arising, the bird exclaimed, 'Give the knave a groat!'

Before I leave the apocryphal stories, let me ask if the reader has ever heard of the bird which won the hundred-pound prize at the Liverpool parrot show? Now, I do not believe that there was ever any such prize at any show held in Liverpool; but the story is a very good one for all that. At this parrot show it was announced that the chief prize (one hundred pounds) would be given to the best talking bird; but beauty of plumage and shape would be taken into account, and would turn the scale, if the speaking powers of several candidates were pretty equally balanced. A Liverpool gentleman happened just then to have a parrot presented to him by a friend in the African trade, the handsomest bird he had ever seen, so beautiful, indeed, that another friend, on seeing it, at once advised the owner to send it to the show. 'But it cannot speak a word,' said the latter, 'and the entries close tomorrow.'

'Never mind that,' urged the visitor. 'I am aware that the prize will be given chiefly for talking; but the judges will give it to such a magnificent bird as this, if it can possibly be done. Lend it to me: I will enter it, and take my chance.'

The bird was lent, and duly entered, after another warning from the owner that the speculation was hopeless.

The show came off in a great hall; and on an enormous horseshoe-shaped counter were two hundred cages, each covered by a hood, and each of course containing a parrot. The judges went

from cage to cage, uncovering them one by one; and the birds being roused by the light and bustle, there followed an immense amount of 'Pretty Poll! Polly, what's o'clock?' and all such familiar utterances.

The last cage to be uncovered held the bird we have described, as she was the last entry made. When the hood was taken off, an irrepressible murmur of admiration broke from the judges as well as the spectators at seeing so splendid a creature; while on her part the bird, blinking and dazzled by the sudden glare of light, seemed to be looking with amazement at the endless row of cages. 'My eye! what a precious lot of parrots!' she exclaimed.

The effect was electrical. The wonderful intelligence of the bird—this 'natural and spontaneous speech,' so it appeared, carried the judges away. Nothing like this had been heard; and they at once awarded the prize to a parrot which could not utter another syllable. The gentleman who had entered her had cleverly calculated upon the effect which such apposite words would produce; and he was not mistaken.

We will now deal with more trustworthy anecdotes. Some parrots are very quick in acquiring words, and are generally fond of displaying these new acquisitions; but occasionally a bird will be profoundly silent until the teacher despairs of her mastering a certain phrase or word; then all at once, and unexpectedly, the 'scholar' will repeat her lesson.

A parrot owned by a family of my acquaintance will furnish several of the anecdotes which, one almost fancies, go to prove the thinking powers of his tribe; but the first incident is, I must admit, only a curious coincidence. His master had tried for a long time, as the appropriate season drew nigh, to teach him to say, 'A merry Christmas and a happy New Year to you!' but the bird, although wonderfully intelligent and docile as a rule, was upon this occasion obstinately silent, and his master gave up the task. But on Christmas Eve some friends called at the house, and as they entered the parlour, the bird, to their delight, but to his master's astonishment, saluted them with, 'A merry Christmas and a happy New Year to you!' The guests were quite ready to declare that this was the most sagacious of all recorded parrots, and might even have believed that such a phenomenon possessed the ability to study the almanac.

This particular parrot is fond of hoaxing the dog, an amusement in which many of his race appear to take a real pleasure, and which seems strongly to support the idea that they can think. This bird could imitate his master's voice and whistle to perfection, and was evidently proud of his power, which was curious, as he was so afraid of his master, or was, at anyrate, so shy in his presence that he would never speak if the gentleman could be seen. Did the latter, however, but step behind a curtain or door, Charlie, as the bird always calls himself, would

rattle away merrily, but stopped at once if his master showed himself.

Carlo, the dog, may be basking in the sun, or snoozing harmlessly in a corner of the room, when suddenly, and quite of his own accord, the parrot will shout so exactly in his master's voice as sometimes to deceive the family: 'Hie, Carlo! Cats!' The dog leaps up, rushes furiously into the garden, looking fiercely round for the intruders; then, encouraged by fresh cries of 'Cats! Cats! Seize them, Carlo!' bounds over the wall into the next garden. The moment he has done this, the parrot, with a wonderful change to his master's sternest tones, calls out: 'Come back, Carlo! Come back, you naughty dog!' Carlo slinks back, ashamed and frightened, evidently expecting to find his owner awaiting him with a cane. Now, this looks like something more than 'a parrot-like repetition' of certain acquired words.

Another bird in my circle is equally fond of 'chaffing' his fellow-housemate the dog. In a very different tone from that employed to poor Carlo when 'cats' were referred to, this one will whistle and say patronisingly: 'Gyp, poor old Gyp! Does Gyp want to go out?' The dog, delighted at the prospect of a run with his master, is invariably taken in, frisking and dancing about, and looking wonderingly around in search of the supposed speaker; but of course is always disappointed. This trick is played by the bird over and over again, always with the same success.

This particular parrot is not at all like the last as regards shyness in his master's presence, for this one, either from his own impudence, or, as is more likely, from his mistress having indiscreetly used the phrase, will often say, when she sees the master put his hat on: 'Now, Harry! get out!'—meaning, no doubt, in the wife's mouth, that the gentleman had no time to spare. I do not suppose that the bird has any such thought as this, and if she had been regularly taught the words, there would be no great marvel in her using them. What makes it odd is that she has not been so taught, and never utters them at any other time. It will be argued that the bird only does it from associating the words with the action of her master putting on his hat; but even then, does not this involve something uncommonly like thinking?

This parrot could also dance the polka, or what she considered was the polka, and proud she was of this accomplishment. You could not please her more than by asking her to show off her steps; and it was amusing, and odd too, to hear the bird, when she was covered up for the night, practising her dance. Whether she did this to improve herself, or because she liked the exercise, or from no logical cause whatever, there is no telling.

I must not forget one anecdote of our friend Charlie, which is perhaps the most curious of any I have to record. There were two young boys, brothers, in the house; and their mother, Charlie's mistress, was in the habit of calling them by name Reginald and Albert, using certain familiar contractions when she did so. It was no wonder that Charlie caught these up; but what will be said of such an application of them

as the following? The bird, as with most parrots, was not allowed water in his cage; so, when thirsty, he would call in what may be termed his own voice: 'Reggie! Reggie!—Reggie or Bertie!—Charlie wants some water!'

Charlie has a great fondness for the paste of which pie-crust is made, and this being known, he was often treated to a piece. He naturally looked for this; and when forgotten, he would invite himself to have some, in the form of words which had doubtless often been used by his mistress; he would say: 'Charlie, do you like paste? Will you have a bit?' This would be said in the voice of his mistress or her daughter; he would then add in quite a changed tone: 'Oh, rather!'

I am inclined to fancy that parrots learn, and perhaps understand, phrases relating to eating and drinking almost sooner than any others. One of my feathered acquaintances was in the habit of inviting visitors to take refreshment. 'Won't you have a cup of tea? Do have a cup of tea,' she would say; and sometimes it was really awkward, as almost compelling the mistress to extend her hospitality to visitors for whom such an invitation had not really been intended. This bird was also fond of saying 'Good-bye!' and never said it at the wrong time. When the visitor was about to depart, he or she would be startled by a voice from a personage hitherto unseen, saying: 'Well, good-bye! good-bye!' If that parrot did not know that this was the proper thing to say, and that this was the proper time for saying it, I am no judge of parrots.

This bird had been taught to count up to six; but she could rarely say the numbers all in order. She often missed one, not the same figure, however; three, four, or five were, but only one at a time, her usual omissions. She was always conscious that she had made a mistake, and on 'skipping' a figure, would give a shrill conical whistle and begin again. Some kind of thought and calculation must have passed through her mind during this performance.

I have already spoken of the fondness of parrots for hoaxing or mischief, and many instances might be furnished; but they do not always bring out the 'thinking' sufficiently to give them a place here. Perhaps this may be said of the two examples following, but yet in each case the bird must surely have had some idea of the effect of what he said.

I was once acquainted with a family in the west of England the father whereof was owner of some extensive brickworks and grounds near his residence. He used to be on his ground very early, and came home to breakfast. His time being limited, his wife liked to have the meal ready when he came in. She used to watch for him, and call to the servant as soon as he was in sight. They kept a parrot; but no one, it is certain, ever taught the bird to imitate this, so it must have been out of sheer mischief that he acquired the phrase referring to his master's return. Often did his voice in exact imitation of his mistress startle the servant: 'Mary, here is your master coming across the field!' Mary would hurry up with the breakfast tackle, the clatter whereof would alarm her mistress, who naturally supposed that the girl had seen Mr

R— close at hand ; and the good lady would hasten from her room possibly fifteen or twenty minutes before she need have appeared, only to find that the parrot—who would exult in a deep chuckle—had hoaxed them again.

That these birds are the same in all parts of the world is sufficiently proved by an anecdote which another friend, a very intelligent Singalese, told me, referring to his own people. A parrot had long been kept by his family, who belonged to the Roman Catholic Singalese, and the bird would sometimes startle my friend's mother, when perhaps she was, so to speak, 'up to her eyes' in household work, and much indisposed to receive visitors, by assuming the voice of one of the daughters, and exclaiming, as if alarmed : 'Mother ! mother ! the priest is coming !' Then the poor woman would at once cease her work, and throw an apron over her head, after the manner of Singalese women, in order decorously to meet the holy father, who was not near the place. The bird did this several times, but yet did not repeat the call over and over again throughout the day, as she would repeat other sentences she had picked up ; so it really does look as though she had some knowledge of the meaning of the words and took a mischievous pleasure in their effect.

Parrots have a bad reputation as being spiteful and cruel. I daresay this is often true ; but many of them are gentle and affectionate, and all have a dog-like faculty of remembering members of a family who have left home. This may appear to the reader as an unlikely power, yet one of the birds already quoted—our friend of the polka—was very fond of one of her young mistresses, who married and went away. When she came home to see her friends, the bird would recognise her step before seeing her, and would call with evident pleasure : 'Hallo, Flo ! Come along, Flo !' Now she might, indeed must have heard the girls' brothers thus greet her ; but how did the parrot know the right time to use the expressions, and that they were to be used to this particular sister ? I can suggest no explanation beyond my first theory, that the birds think.

As regards the affection of parrots, most persons who have kept them will have some corroborative anecdotes to tell, and yet the birds have a reputation for spitefulness and malice-bearing. This last accusation, by the way, tends to support a belief in their thinking. I again admit that they are often spiteful ; but they have generally been teased a good deal and their tempers spoilt.

The parrot last described was fond of all the family in which she lived, a tolerably large one ; and when let out of her cage, which was usually done for an hour every day, she would go from chair to chair and kiss in her fashion every one present. How did she learn that a kiss was the usual way of showing affection ? She might perhaps have been taught to do this mechanically or to one person ; but to go the round of the family one after the other was her own idea—not at all a bad one for a parrot. That she knew what she was doing, and what was the meaning of a kiss, was made abundantly clear at other times. For instance, when her favourite the former Miss Florence came in,

the bird would say very softly : 'Come and kiss me, darling !' and appear supremely delighted when the young lady complied, which I need hardly say was always the case.

THE GOLDEN LAMP :

A TALE OF FISHER'S FOLLY.

CHAP. III.—CONCLUSION.

HOLDING up the lantern and peering downwards, John Westcott found himself at the head of a flight of brick steps. These steps were incommodiously narrow, being built up between the outer and inner walls of the old mansion. It was impossible, with such broad shoulders as Westcott's, to descend otherwise than obliquely. The sensation was not agreeable ; less so, even, than being lowered into a well, for a rope is something : here the connecting link with the outer world was, as it were, completely cut off ; even the sound of Marian's piano having gradually died out. Or had she stopped playing ? thought Westcott. Had Mr Carter awake ?

Although the chilling draught of air was lessened when the panel was closed, the cold damp atmosphere, and that peculiar mustiness which clings to vaults and such-like underground places, became more perceptible at every step ; and these steps seemed endless. Yet he had proposed to return in ten minutes. Was it possible to complete this expedition in search of his old uncle's gold in so short a time ? It scarcely seemed probable. And yet Westcott did not despair. The encouraging look which Marian had given him inspired confidence in his purpose. If he had acted impulsively, the motive had been a good one. His prompt decision was stimulated by a keen desire to save his uncle's firm from ruin : in truth, he had been seized with an undefined sense of apprehension when first encountering the Indian servant in his travels. The man had told him, in a rambling way, that Mr Girdlestone's death might prove a serious blow to the business ; and he had implored his 'young master,' as he had called Westcott—for he had known him when a boy—to proceed without loss of time to Fisher's Folly and put matters right while there was still time. The man had awakened a deep interest in Westcott's mind concerning the old house and its surroundings, not omitting the beautiful Miss Carter. Indeed, the young man had pictured to himself a lovely girl, from the Indian's description, lighting the Golden Lamp, long before the 'vision' came in sight. The first glimpse of Marian, when entering the precincts of Fisher's Folly a few hours ago, had somewhat resembled the realisation of a dream.

But Westcott had no time for such reflections at this moment ; for he had reached the foot of the steps and had come upon a long passage. It was at right angles to the steps : it widened out sufficiently to enable him to walk straight ahead. He at once quickened his pace ; but he was careful as he advanced to observe every detail of the brickwork ; for he dreaded the mere thought of losing his way in such a dark and mysterious locality.

To any one with a belief in the supernatural,

however slight, this was not an expedition likely to awaken a feeling of scepticism. More than one strange fancy flashed across Westcott's brain. A sudden current of air, which he now encountered, was like the icy breath of some unseen phantom that had hurried by. But this only proved to be, when he raised his lantern and examined the walls, a small iron grating, which was doubtless placed there for ventilation. But he had no sooner explained away this phenomenon than a more weird sensation seized upon him. The noise of muffled footsteps broke upon his ear—footsteps that seemed to be approaching nearer and nearer; for each moment they sounded more distinctly, and beyond the passage along which he was advancing. Was it the tread of a sentinel, in the shape of Mr Girdlestone's ghost, on guard over the bags of gold? Westcott stopped and listened. The sound of the footstep ceased: he had heard the echo of his own footfall in an extensive vault. A pace beyond where he had stopped would have brought him to the entrance: a few feet more and he would probably have fallen head foremost into the cellar.

Was it to be wondered at that the Indian servant, Westcott now thought, had fled so precipitately from this house in Fisher's Folly after his master's death? If he had once followed him into these vaults, as the man professed to have done, his sudden dread could be understood. Mr Girdlestone must have seemed, in the eyes of this unreflecting native, something almost superhuman—a being whose disembodied spirit haunted Fisher's Folly. Had not a shadowy form, as he imagined, appeared to him when he was on the point of revealing the secret? Even Westcott, who was among the most sceptical concerning disembodied spirits, began to experience a certain indefinable tremor; for the vault at the edge of which he now found himself had no visible limit. The light from the lantern in whichever way he directed it gave him no clue as to the dimensions of the place: it was, he could only conclude, an immense cellar. He shrank back with a natural feeling of hesitation. Which direction should he take? If he descended and went forward into the impenetrable darkness, the chance of finding his way back appeared remote. His only plan would be to follow, if possible, the direction of the wall, either to the right or to the left. By this means he might, without abandoning all hope, continue the search.

Before taking another step forward, however, he resolved to make a close examination of the spot. And he soon discovered that the entrance to this passage along which he had come had been cut out of the brick wall. The hole was unsymmetrical, but sufficiently large for an ordinary-sized man to pass through. The bricks which had doubtless been taken from this hole lay in a heap two or three feet below. While inspecting this heap, over which he had been on the point of stumbling, the light from the lantern fell upon something which set Westcott's heart beating fast. The floor of the cellar, as far as he could see, was unpaved: it was covered with damp-looking clay. He crept down over the bricks and alighted upon it. The clay was trodden down into a distinct footpath towards the left and close under the wall! To what point could this footpath lead? Westcott did not

hesitate another second. Bending forward, with the lantern almost touching the ground, he carefully followed the beaten track. Presently he stopped and raised the lantern. He was standing opposite a closed door. In his impatience he struck it with his heel; but it resisted the shock. He hastened to detach the key from the lantern and place it in the keyhole. It fitted the lock: but no force would move the key; it resisted all his efforts to turn it.

Westcott drew the key out of the lock in despair. He stood looking at it with a puzzled face. But presently the puzzled expression changed. His eyes became hopeful and animated. He noticed marks of rust upon the key—marks which were not there when he placed it in the lock. He knelt down and opened the lantern. Having unscrewed the lamp near the wick he found the lower part more than half full of oil. He poured some drops upon the key and again thrust it in the keyhole. After some persuasion it began to show signs of yielding. The key moved, then stuck, then moved again. Westcott's patience was becoming exhausted: his face flushed, and his hand shook from excitement. Suddenly the key turned, and the door flew open. Westcott raised the lantern hastily above his head and went stealthily forward.

Meanwhile, Mr Carter, asleep in his armchair, was dreaming about his old partner. He dreamt that he could hear him pacing up and down the dining-hall, while he sat at his writing-table in the office below. It seemed to him that Mr Girdlestone had found out the disastrous state of affairs: that the discovery had brought him out of his grave, and that he was exerting all his great financial faculties in order to save the house; and his peculiar walk, as it appeared to Mr Carter, expressed his anger at the situation. He felt himself greatly humiliated. He had not the courage to go and place the matter clearly before Mr Girdlestone. He was persuaded of his inferiority as a financier—though he had done his best, as he kept repeating to himself, he 'had done his best.' But the monotonous tread of his relentless partner still went on: it seemed to enter into the very throbings of his brain. He could not shut out the sound. At length it became so unbearable that he cried out in despair, and awoke.

'Did you call me, father?'

Marian was standing at the entrance to the dining-room with her eyes fixed anxiously upon the merchant. Mr Carter put his hand to his forehead perplexedly. 'A strange dream,' he muttered. Then suddenly looking up, he said: 'Where is John?'

Marian glanced at the clock. The ten minutes which John Westcott had named had almost expired. Would he soon return? She listened with intense eagerness for any indication of his coming.

Again Mr Carter passed his hand across his brow. 'I have been dreaming,' said he. 'Am I dreaming now?'—and he glanced round the room. Suddenly he started up. 'Where is the Golden Lamp?'

At this moment, Marian, standing within her boudoir and near the secret panel, heard a slight noise; but she dreaded to look round;

she dreaded to take her eyes from her father's face. She spoke to herself in a low tone of despair: 'What shall I do?'

Immediately a muffled tone whispered in reply: 'Tell him everything. All is well.'

Mr Carter had sunk into his chair. Marian approached him. Her face brightened with a sudden feeling of gratitude and delight. But the merchant did not look up. 'I have been dreaming,' he repeated. 'I dreamt that Mr Girdlestone had come back to life—that he was pacing up and down this room. He seemed to know all about our troubles.'

Marian sat down beside the merchant. 'Father,' said she, 'I, too, have had a dream.'

He looked up with a smile. 'About Mr Girdlestone?' There was always something cheering in his daughter's voice.

'Partly,' she replied, 'and partly about his money.'

'His money, Marian?'

'Yes. I have been dreaming that news had reached us about Mr Girdlestone's Indian servant. He knew everything connected with his master's affairs: he even knew the meaning of that key which has been so long a mystery to us.'

'Why, Marian?—'

'That is not all. The news that reached us—in my dream—was that the key opened a secret strong-room. The Indian was conscience-stricken; and on his death-bed implored some one to come and tell us all about it. And,' added Marian, 'some one came—some one who took the lantern and the key and went in search of the strong-room; for in this secret place, as I dreamt, there are bags and bags of gold.'

The merchant was now looking keenly into his daughter's face. Marian did not return his glance, but she placed her hand persuasively on his arm; for he had half risen from his chair. 'The only way, father, to reach this strong-room,' continued Marian—the only way that the Indian knew of was by moving a panel in the wall. And the person to whom he confided this secret—a person related to Mr Girdlestone—followed his instructions and found—'

'Found what?'

Marian could no longer keep her father from starting out of the chair. He had guessed the meaning of her words. He was beginning to comprehend that, heedful of his anxiety, she was trying, in her love for him, to break the news of some good fortune which had befallen them, and in such a manner that it might not come upon him too suddenly. She stood looking attentively at his anxious face as he walked up and down the room. He seemed to be mastering the sudden emotion which the dawning knowledge of brighter days had awakened. Presently Marian put her hands gently upon his shoulders and looked up into his face. 'It is no dream, father. It is true. The person to whom Mr Girdlestone's servant confided all this is Mr Westcott. But it was his wish, before raising your expectations, to make sure that the man's story was well founded. It is well founded; and Mr Westcott is waiting to tell you all the details himself.'

Marian induced her father to resume his place by the hearth. He sat down, and with his hands pressed to his forehead, stared vacantly at the

fire. But suddenly he looked up. A quick step had caught his ear. Westcott stood before him with the lantern in one hand and an old-looking bag in the other.

'Mr Carter,' were his first words, 'make your mind easy. The house of Girdlestone and Company is saved. This bag must contain at least a thousand guineas, and there are more than fifty like it in the strong-room. Is not this convincing?' As Westcott spoke, he lifted the bag suddenly. It was yellow and rotten from age, and the action of raising it burst open the sides, and the floor was immediately covered with gold. The guineas clinked and spun about in all directions; and some of them, rolling towards the hearth, settled down at Mr Carter's feet.

Neither John Westcott nor Marian's father thought of seeking any rest that night. They were too deeply occupied with a minute examination of the cellars under the old house in Fisher's Folly, and bags of gold that Mr Girdlestone's relative had discovered there. No place could have better served a hoarder's purpose; for it was a secret strong-room that had been built centuries ago in which to store treasure in the time of civil war or serious rioting in the city of London.

It would have done Mr Girdlestone's heart good, let us hope, had he witnessed the prosperous turn which the old firm now took. Under Mr Carter's instruction—for Marian's father was in reality an excellent man of business—John Westcott became in time as great a financier as his uncle had been before him. And when he was urged to accept a partnership in the house, a year or two after the memorable date of his return to England, he could not refuse; for he and Marian had in the meantime learned to love each other. Besides, the will which he found had named him his uncle's heir. And so, after their marriage, Mr Girdlestone's house was for many years their chosen home.

This old mansion in Fisher's Folly, still standing in these modern times, is untenanted. It has a lonely and dilapidated appearance. The windows—including the great central window, within which the Golden Lamp once stood—are begrimed with dust and smoke; and the steps below are as green as antiquated tombstones. A great padlock and chain are affixed to the front door; for the lease has run out at last, and this landmark in the history of London will soon be demolished and forgotten.

LITERARY TREASURE-TROVE.

It has been customary from very early times to employ the skins of animals as material for the reception of such writing as, from its importance, was deemed peculiarly worthy of preservation; and leather of all kinds, from the thick integument of the full-grown animal to the delicate membrane of the new-born young, has been extensively used for this purpose. All such varieties may conveniently be referred to as vellum, although the term is properly applied only to the parchment obtained from the calf, and although the skins of various animals have

been utilised for the composition of volumes and records.

The celebrated Biblical manuscript the 'Codex Sinaiticus'—about the authenticity of which so fierce a controversy raged some thirty years ago—is written upon the finest skins of antelopes. But the majority of existing ancient manuscripts are written upon vellum; those upon papyrus having yielded very generally to the inroads of time.

The ink first used probably was some natural animal pigment, such as the black fluid obtained from various species of cuttle-fish; but the limited supply of this material soon led to the use of a mechanical mixture of water, gum, and lamp-black, and the characters were painted, rather than written, by means of a broad-pointed reed. As ink of this simple nature was easily removed from the surface of the parchment by the mere application of moisture, it was early found necessary to contrive some means of forming a more durable ink, and for this purpose the expedient was adopted of treating the mixture with some substance, such as vinegar, of the nature of a mordant, which would penetrate the parchment written upon, and form an ink not liable to fade. A chemical dye, consisting of an infusion of galls with sulphate of iron, was afterwards used, as from its vitreous nature it bit into the medium employed; but a compound vegetable ink containing a good deal of carbon pigment was subsequently adopted, and was very generally employed down to the middle ages. With ink of this sort the best and most ancient manuscripts which have been preserved to us were written; and the separate leaves, after being allowed to dry slowly, were bound together into volumes. Pliny and Vitruvius, as well as other writers, give receipts for the manufacture of inks.

In times when paper was unknown and skins practically were the only substances available for writing, and were scarce and correspondingly expensive, the would-be scribe was forced to fall back for his supply of parchment upon older books which had become obsolete, or, in his opinion, contained matter of less importance than that which he intended to commit to writing. A practice was therefore initiated of removing the characters first written by washing off the old ink, or more mechanically by scraping the parchment with a knife, thus in some measure repeating the original process of preparing the skin for use by rubbing it with pumice-stone. The surface of parchment which had been subjected to treatment of this nature, especially if subsequently polished, would not show any traces of the first writing, and was again available for use. Thus arose a class of manuscripts known as 'codices scripti,' rewritten books; or as 'palimpsests,' literally, 'again-rubbed' books. The practice, as originally followed out, has given rise to but little inconvenience; for the ancient book-sellers were good judges, and took care never to destroy a valuable treatise, but only obliterated such works as had no sale in the limited literary market of the ancient world.

Frequent references to palimpsests occur in the classical authors. Cicero laughingly alludes to the parsimony of his friend Trebatius, the juris-consult, who, to write a letter, erased some pre-

vious communication; and Plutarch, in his treatise upon the Conversations of Princes and Philosophers, laments the failure of Plato's visit to Sicily, and compares Dionysius of Syracuse to an old book from which the writing has been erased, but which is still defaced by the ancient stains, which can never be completely removed, appearing under the newly-written characters. Ulpian, the great jurist, states that a will can be either on fresh paper, on paper which has been used previously ('charta delectio'), or on the back of paper the face of which is already occupied, and that property can be claimed under a will so written. Gaius, Martial, and Catullus also refer to palimpsests, the allusions in the epigrams of the latter being to paper or parchment so prepared that authors could easily revise and correct their work.

In the middle ages the rage for theological controversy, combined with a constantly increasing scarcity of parchment, caused the practice of remanufacture to be resuscitated; and as the writers from the fourth to the tenth century were chiefly ecclesiastics, a determined and systematic destruction took place of the invaluable literary treasures which had accumulated in the libraries of the monasteries since the times when the incursions of the northern barbarians had scattered the collections of antiquity. As a result of the conquests of the Calif Omar, and the subjection of Egypt to the dominion of the Arabs and the newly-founded fanatic Mohammedan faith, the manufacture of paper from the papyrus ceased in the seventh century; and had not the art of making coarse paper, known as 'charta bombycinia,' from cotton or some similar vegetable substance, been invented in the ninth century, and paper from linen rags in the thirteenth, thus supplying an unlimited amount of material for writing, it is probable that theological discussion would have deprived us of every line of the ancient classical authors.

Fortunately, it has been discovered that however thoroughly the effacement has apparently been performed, sufficient traces of the early characters are so indelibly ingrained into the texture of the skin, that some of the ink can always be rendered visible by the aid of chemical reagents; and thus many most valuable ancient works have been recovered, although too frequently in a fragmentary and mutilated condition. If a parchment from which the first inscription has been obliterated be carefully washed with a test for iron, such as a solution of nut-galls, and then exposed to the action of light, some of the metallic portion of the ink absorbed by the porous texture of the skin will become more or less discernible to a practised eye by reason of the formation of a black precipitate, due to the restoration of the gallic acid and tanning material; and thus many palimpsests of the highest importance have been deciphered during the last two hundred years. This method of rendering hidden writing visible is of comparatively modern origin, and attracted very little attention until the experiments of Blagden upon some parchment manuscripts of the ninth to the fifteenth centuries produced some very remarkable results. The modern art of photography, too, has been impressed into the service of restoration, for it is found that many parchments

which are too decayed to bear the somewhat rough handling of the laboratory, and the characters upon which are quite illegible to ordinary vision, are yet capable of giving up their secrets to the camera and the sensitive gelatine plate.

The Syriac collection of manuscripts which was brought from the monastery of St Mary Deipara, in the Nitrian desert in Egypt, and is now in the British Museum, is very rich in palimpsests. It includes, in addition to Biblical fragments, some portions of a sixth-century copy of the 'Iliad,' and a unique manuscript of the 'Annals' of the Roman historian Liciianus. The latter is a curious example of a double palimpsest. The historian was carefully washed out by a Latin grammarian of the sixth century, who in his turn was ignominiously effaced by a Syriac monk some few centuries later. The sixth-century manuscript known as the 'Codex Regius' or 'Ephraim,' which is preserved in the library of Paris, is also a rescript. The celebrated 'Institutes' of Gaius were discovered in 1816 by Niebuhr in the library of the Chapter of Verona, where a collection of important manuscripts on jurisprudence had long existed. The history of the recovery of this long-lost treasure forms one of the most interesting chapters in the whole annals of literature. While on his way to Rome as envoy for Prussia, Niebuhr treated chemically the ninety-seventh leaf of an eighth-century manuscript containing the Epistles of St Jerome, and deciphered sufficient to satisfy his acute mind that lying beneath was a portion of the work of some Roman jurisconsult of the Antonine era, that age when, according to Gibbon, the human race was most happy and prosperous, as the vast extent of the Roman empire was governed by absolute power under the guidance of wisdom and virtue.

The anticipations of Niebuhr were fully realised, for, owing to the action taken by the Berlin Academy of Sciences, the greater part of the parchment was transcribed during the next few years by Greschen, Bekker, and Blume, the latter of whom used his chemicals so recklessly that he unfortunately damaged the manuscript. In 1820, a first edition of the work was published in Berlin, thus restoring a book which is invaluable to the student of the antiquities of the Roman Law.

THE RIVALS.

BY KENNETH LEIGH.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

MRS FLUSHTON was a widow, and though she was rich, handsome, and absolutely independent, yet she felt that her life lacked interest. She had never had any children; she was not a clever woman; and the wheels of her household, under the care of a most excellent housekeeper, moved too easily to give her even the occupation of scolding her maids. She had tried going abroad in summer, and for three months she had jogged very contentedly over the Continent with a maid and a courier. But, as we have said, she was not a clever woman, and she could not rouse herself to enthusiasm even in Italy. Picture-galleries tired her eyes, and the music and incense in the churches produced a somnolent effect upon her.

Nor did she care for reading up her guide-book for more than a quarter of an hour at a time, and then it was so difficult to find the page at which she had left off, that when she returned to England she was in a hopelessly confused state as to the various cities she had passed through, and invariably associated Venice with Zenobia, and Rome with Desdemona, which latter heroine she also confused with Cleopatra, owing perhaps to a certain similarity in the sadness of their fates.

Since she had returned, nothing of interest had happened to break the monotony of her life except the loss of her maid, who had married the courier. Though Mrs Flushton had felt rather aggrieved by this desertion on the part of a maid who had been carefully trained and knew all her ways, yet she had given her a handsome tea-service, and had now, having got another maid, forgiven her. After all, it had its advantages, for the last maid had never got on with Perk the pug-dog, and the present one was fond of dogs, and had consented to undertake his Saturday bath. Still Mrs Flushton felt, as she sat sipping her chocolate over the fire on a foggy November morning, that her life lacked interest, and she gazed rather helplessly round the luxurious morning-room, as if to try to find it.

'I will give a dinner-party,' she said. 'I am sure my dinners are always successful.' She laid down her cup and, opening a drawer of her escritoire, took out her visiting-book. After a time she sighed. 'The Ellingtons and the Browns aren't at home, and the Carringtons are in mourning,' she said. 'After all,' she added, 'it is very early for a dinner; and it's very difficult without a man to take the foot of the table. I think it must be an evening.'

She re-opened her visiting-book at the letter A and began making a pencil list. Presently she stopped and sighed again. 'I wish I had a feature,' she said. 'A mere musical at-home would seem to have no reason for it; if I had some one to ask them to meet, now!'

At this moment a footman came in and presented a silver tray with three letters on it. Mrs Flushton took them, and carefully examined all three before opening any, which is a way of ladies when they have little to do. One was a bill. This Mrs Flushton laid on her capacious silken lap. She had never known what it was to feel a trifle anxious on opening a bill. The second was a thin square envelope addressed in a lady's hand, and with a crest on the back. This Mrs Flushton opened. It was an at-home card, with a crest in the corner, and 'MRS LEITH LEAMINGTON at Home December 7th and 21st; January 4th and 18th; February 1st, 15th, and 29th, from 9-11.30 o'clock, 12 Buckingham Gardens.'

Mrs Flushton perused this card several times, after which she laid it down, and, taking up her knitting, clicked her needles fast and furiously for some moments. Then she laid the knitting down and took up the card again.

'So like Mrs Leith Leamington!' she ejaculated, raising her eyes in protest to the ceiling. 'She always tries to do something new and make a sensation! Fortnightly at-homes!—and the last on leap-year's day! If that isn't Mrs Leith Leamington all over!—I wish I'd thought of fortnightly at-homes,' she added, after a pause.

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Then her eyes fell on the neglected third letter, and she took it up with a slight look of curiosity at the unknown writing and the foreign stamp.

'MY DEAR AUNT,' it ran, 'I don't know if you have altogether forgotten my existence; but I hope not, because I am going to follow the example of all scapegrace young nephews, and only recall myself to your remembrance in order to ask a favour. The fact is, my ten years are up, and I've six months' leave to come home; but it is all very well for the Colonel to shake hands with me and congratulate me, and all the other fellows to look at me with the eyes of envy; but I—haven't a home to go to. I thought first of refusing, and thus making myself famous in a moment, as being the first man on record who would have refused home-leave after ten years' service. But the ridiculous part of the thing is that I have got just the same feeling of a yearning to see the old country and all the old haunts, and no black faces, and wind and snow, as if I'd a patriarchal roof and a welcome waiting me! And so it was that I suddenly—don't be offended—remembered my Aunt Betsy, and that she cried when I went to India ten years ago. Aunt Betsy, if I come home, may I come and see you first, before knocking about a little? Or will you say: "Yes, I cried when you went away ten years ago; but all these ten years you have only written to me once!" India is an awfully hot place for letter-writing; the thermometer at my side is up to ninety degrees now.—I hope you are well in health, aunt, and that you don't think me a confoundedly impudent chap for writing like this.—Your affectionate nephew,

FRED OSBORNE.'

Mrs Flushton folded the letter up and put it back into the envelope with a curious expression on her face. Then she suddenly began to sob. 'Poor lad! poor Fred! Oh, if Mary had been alive! Her son, that she was so proud of!—her first baby! Oh Mary, little Mary! I'll be a mother to your son! I'll welcome him home for you, darling! Oh, I've been a selfish woman; I've been a lone, selfish woman!'

Mrs Leith Leamington sat at the top of her breakfast-table, dressed in a flowered morning robe and a dainty lace cap, reading her letters. She was between thirty and forty years of age, and everything about her conveyed the impression of being artificial: the bronze-gold of her elaborate 'coiffure'; the expression of her thin, handsome, powdered face; the tones of her voice when she spoke; and her striking morning costume. She was the kind of lady of whom you find yourself unconsciously wondering what her husband privately thinks about her; but also the kind of lady whose husband is usually blindly devoted to her.

Her husband was not at the breakfast-table, having left for his office a good two hours before; so the splendours of the morning gown were wasted on a very pretty young governess who sat opposite Mrs Leith Leamington, with her eyes fixed on her plate, and a curly-headed boy of about eight, who sat at the side in a high chair, drumming his sturdy fists on the table and eyeing the jam dishes critically.

'Do say grace quick, mummie,' he said suddenly,

having made up his mind about the jams. 'Miss Lucas has been down for an hour, and she made me come down-stairs too, though I told her you were never down before eleven o'clock! And we're both so hungry.—Aren't we, Miss Lucas?'

'Harold, be silent!' said Mrs Leamington; but she took his advice, and laid down her letters, said grace, and let breakfast begin.

'You will find Harold a very troublesome charge, Miss Lucas, I am afraid,' she said.

Miss Lucas raised her brown eyes shyly, and dropped them again quickly as she found Mrs Leamington regarding her through gold 'pince-nez.'

'Oh, I am sure'—she began; but Harold interrupted her.

'No; she won't, mummie. We get on splendidly.—Don't we, Miss Lucas?'

Mrs Leamington began reading her letters again; but all the time she was thinking: 'Perfect manners—so shy and modest. Very pretty, too. She will be quite the rage. I must see if she has proper dresses.'

'Do you dance?' asked Mrs Leamington abruptly.

'Dance? Yes! I learned at school; but I have not of course danced for some years,' she answered, and glanced doubtfully at Harold: was she going to be asked to teach that sturdy infant the art of waltzing?

'Ah!—we have a good many dances here,' Mrs Leamington went on. 'I myself am going to have open evenings once a fortnight, and I think of making two of them into dances. I hope you will enjoy them.'

Miss Lucas beamed with sudden grateful surprise; but Mrs Leamington did not even see the glance. She was actuated by no impulse of kindness; it was only that she wanted to give these dances, and the presence of the young girl in her house made a charming excuse for giving them.

'Oh, you are very kind to me, Mrs Leamington! I did not know—did not expect!—'

'Mother, Miss Lucas raced me all the way down-stairs this morning; and she says she used to slide down the banisters when she was a little boy-girl. And she says!—'

'Harry, if you've finished your breakfast, you may go and prepare your books in the school-room for Miss Lucas,' said his mother, taking pity on her 'protégée.'

He slipped off his chair and went; and Miss Lucas, having obtained leave, followed him.

Mrs Lucas was an orphan. Her father, a clergyman of the Church of England, had died three years before, when May was eighteen. Since then, she and her mother had lived together in a little cottage in the Devonshire village which was their home, and had eked out their scanty income by receiving as boarders two little Indian-born children. Then the parents of the children had returned, and the mother and daughter could not hear of any other boarders, and funds began to run very low. They then made up their minds to separate and break up the little cottage home. Mrs Lucas consulted the vicar, her husband's successor, and he advertised for a governess's post for May.

Mrs Leith Leamington was a woman of caprice. She had been troubled by the accents

of the various applicants who came to see her in answer to her advertisement, and was struck by the fact of May being the daughter of a clergyman and only twenty-one. She wrote to the vicar who was given as reference; and on receipt of his letter of warm recommendation promptly wrote and engaged May on a salary of fifty pounds a year, thus bringing joy into the cottage parlour, and to the widow and her daughter, who cried over the crested note.

'She will be just a sweet young Devon girl, and quite a companion to me. It is very irksome going everywhere alone. Oh, she will be useful to me in a thousand ways!' Mrs Leamington said to her husband.

'Will she be able to manage that young scapegrace Harry?—that is the chief question. His manners are abominable,' replied Mr Leamington.

'Oh yes,' answered his wife indolently. 'She is accustomed to the care of children, and studied Greek and Latin and mathematics with her father, who was a great scholar. Harry only needs gentle supervision.'

'Gentle fiddlestick!' growled Harry's father. 'I'd rather trust to the Greek and Latin and mathematics!'

When May Lucas arrived—the night before the breakfast-table scene—Mrs Leamington had had a moment of misgiving. She was so *very* pretty. There was nothing artificial about her sunny brown hair, and her fair English skin needed no aid from the powder-box.

'I may have no end of trouble,' Mrs Leamington had thought, looking at her. 'I don't want to be turned into a chaperon to my boy's governess!'

But to-day Miss Lucas's manners were so exquisitely shy and grateful that Mrs Leamington felt relieved.

Mrs Flushton's nephew had arrived. The whole town knew it. Mrs Flushton had herself driven down to the station to meet him, and had brought the bronzed young hero in triumph home. After ten years of Indian native service, he had indeed fallen into a clover-field. His aunt gazed into his handsome young face, seeking wistfully for some likeness to her younger sister, his mother, who had died nearly twenty years ago. She found some likeness in the eyes, she said; and he smiled at her, and said carelessly: 'Oh, I was always supposed to be the image of my father;' and then regretted the remark, seeing his aunt's disappointment, and added, hastily, 'except about the eyes, you know?' His father had married again, and had become alienated from the family of his first wife, and had died seven years before. Mrs Flushton did not think about him in connection with her sister's child.

'Aunt, you will spoil me! You make me feel quite awkward: I am not used to it!' Fred Osborne exclaimed, laughingly, as his aunt showed him the rooms she had prepared for him, with blazing fires in both the bedroom and the smoking-room adjoining, and a regal supply of cigarettes and cigars in boxes on the writing-table.

'I knew you would smoke,' she said, with a gentle laugh of triumph. 'But you won't spend

all your time up in this room, Fred?' she mildly observed. 'You may smoke cigarettes in the dining-room, you know. I shall soon get used to the scent of smoke, though my dear late husband, your uncle, was not a smoker. But cigars,' she added timidly—'well, if you don't mind, the scent of them *clings* very much!'

Her nephew laughed, and reassured her, and she then left him to dress for dinner.

And the temptation was great, as he sat at the bottom of the small oval dinner-table, laden with glass and silver and flowers, with the old Scotch butler behind his chair intent on an opportunity of refilling his glass, and his aunt, elaborately head-dressed in his honour, beaming across at him and hanging on his words—the temptation was great to colour his Indian life with a touch of the adventurous and to pose as the hero of many a battle. But the native truthfulness of the young man prevailed, and the stories he told his aunt gave a picture of barrack routine, the stern duties and the rigorous discipline of a soldier's life. He was rewarded, for his aunt added all the colouring, transforming him on the spot into a dauntless hero; and the old butler reported him down-stairs as a nice, quiet, merry young gentleman, real civil to his aunt, who's just fair taken with him, and it's easy to see who'll be her heir.

Indeed, the whole town saw easily who would be her heir; and mothers with marriageable daughters smiled on the young captain, and asked him to their houses; and Captain Osborne, who was enjoying his holiday, flirted with every one, and gained universal popularity.

'Aunt Betsy,' he said to Mrs Flushton as they were driving home from Mrs Leith Leamington's first evening, 'who is that very pretty little girl who is staying with Mrs Leamington? She was so very shy, and would stand in a corner, and seemed quite embarrassed when Mrs Leamington came and poked her out. Who is she?'

'Oh, she is Mrs Leith Leamington's governess.'

The young man whistled. 'She's very young to be a governess, isn't she?' he muttered. 'Poor little thing!'

She was indeed very young to be a governess: far too young. The whole of the next morning, while she and Harold were at work, the verb *amo* became confused in her head with visions of the young officer who had talked to her so pleasantly and sympathetically last night; and Harold's eyes fixed in holy horror when she wrote down $7 + 5 = 9$ on the black-board. How could he tell that she was recalling the tone of voice in which Fred Osborne had said, 'Till to-morrow evening,' as he wished her good-night?

This evening she was going to meet him again, and then again on Saturday. She became lost in a pleasant dream.

'Miss Lucas, that's the map of Palestine, and we're still in Europe,' observed Harry in an aggrieved and squeaky tone.

Miss Lucas gathered her faculties together, and began the geography lesson with great sternness and dignity.

'I think I shall ask Mrs Leamington not to take me out any more; I find society upsets me for my work,' she said to herself severely, as the luncheon bell rang, and she and her charge went

down-stairs. Somehow, she never did ask Mrs Leamington not to take her out with her any more ; on the contrary, she wore her best gown that evening, and bought some violets to fasten into her hair.

Mrs Flushton sat in an armchair by the side of her drawing-room fire, buttoning a pair of suede gloves on to her fat jewelled hands, and clasping her gold bracelets round her wrists. Her nephew, in immaculate war-paint, was standing in front of the mirror over the mantel-piece, sticking a spray of white stephanotis into his button-hole.

'Fred,' said Mrs Flushton, as she fixed the last button of her gloves and arranged the folds of her velvet train, 'you are to take down Lady Pearson.'

'And who will be on the other side of me?' asked her nephew irrelevantly.

'Miss Graham,' answered Mrs Flushton. 'Of course you must take down Lady Pearson, as she is the chief lady : you mustn't forget she is deaf. But I have put Miss Graham on the other side of you ; I am sure you will like her.'

'Lady Pearson or Miss Graham?'

'Miss Graham, of course.'

'Have I ever met her?'

'Why, Fred ! of course you have ! She is that tall handsome girl in yellow I introduced you to the night before last. She is only just come to town. She is a great heiress, Fred, besides being a very nice girl.'

'Too much happiness !' murmured Fred.—'And who are coming in the evening, aunt ?'

'Oh, every one ! The rooms will be quite full. We shall utterly outrival Mrs Leith Leamington's receptions.'

'They are very jolly,' observed Fred.

'Yes,' said Mrs Flushton doubtfully ; 'but her rooms are very small. She is so proud of her Queen Anne furniture—all those spindle-legged sideboards and chairs, and those cabinets and plates and yellow silk hangings ; but really I am old-fashioned enough,' said Mrs Flushton, gazing complacently about her very luxurious but certainly not high-art drawing-room, 'to think that comfort—'

At this moment the first guests were announced, and aunt and nephew rose to receive them.

Fred Osborne made himself very agreeable all dinner-time, and proved a perfect host. He talked alternately with Lady Pearson and the stately Miss Graham. Mrs Flushton, at the other end of the table, was more preoccupied, and lent but half her attention to the portly bishop on her right hand and the wizened old judge on her left. She cast anxious glances down the table to see if her pet plan were progressing.

Towards the end of dinner, matters began to look hopeful. Her nephew and Miss Graham were chatting and laughing gaily. Mrs Flushton lingered over dessert as long as she could, and then rose, fearing the arrival of the evening guests. When in the drawing-room she went and sat by the heiress, and adroitly led the conversation on to her nephew. The heiress turned her large vacant eyes upon her, and appeared to be interested. Mrs Flushton prided herself on her diplomacy, which was usually rather transparent, so she soon changed the conversation, and rushed away to speak to the

bishop's wife. When the gentlemen came up-stairs, some of the after-dinner guests had already begun to arrive, and the rooms rapidly filled. Mrs Flushton took up her stand by the door ; and her nephew, who was talking to a group of men in a corner, also kept his eyes fixed on the in-coming guests. Soon a tall, elaborately-dressed lady entered, the gaslight falling on her tortured hair, and making the gold-dust, with which it was powdered, sparkle. She was closely followed by a small slight girl in a soft white dress, and with white flowers in her fair hair, and whose big frightened eyes glanced quickly round the room, lighted for a second on Fred Osborne, and then glanced hastily past him in another direction. Captain Osborne left the group of men, and the next moment he and May Lucas were threading their way down-stairs together. Miss Graham was standing all alone in a corner, stiff and statuesque. She had only lately come to town, and her acquaintances were few.

Mr Leith Leamington slipped away early, to go to his club ; but Mrs Leith Leamington and May stayed till nearly the end. Then Mrs Leamington rustled up and said good-bye to her hostess. 'I shall hope to see you and Captain Osborne on the 18th,' she murmured effusively.

Mrs Flushton and Mrs Leamington hated one another with that deadly hate which scorns to own a reason ; but they beamed as they pressed one another's gloved hands.

'Good-night ; it has been such a pleasant evening,' said May simply, as she came up after Mrs Leamington.

'My dear, I haven't seen you the whole evening ; I hope you have had some supper,' said Mrs Flushton kindly ; she liked the little governess.

May Lucas blushed and murmured, 'Yes, thank you !' and escaped.

'Miss Lucas, I must congratulate you !' said Mrs Leamington as they drove away.

'Oh no ! What for ?' exclaimed May.

'Of course he will have all his aunt's money, and she will never let him go back to India again. She will buy him a commission here. He is a very nice young man, perfect in every way ; and it will serve Mrs Flushton right for her insufferable pride, she— Oh ! I beg your pardon ; I didn't mean that !' And Mrs Leamington paused apologetically.

But May did not heed the last part of her speech ; she was sitting bolt upright in the dark carriage in a perfect agony of shame. 'Oh, Mrs Leamington—don't ! You mustn't ! He never—'

'No, no ; but any one can see !—'

'But I think we will not talk any more about it,' said May, with a sudden dignity.

'Oh, very well, my dear ; but talking does not alter matters.'

In this case, however, it did alter matters, for when May got back and up to her own room, she flung herself down on the hearthrug and gazed into the dying fire and forced herself to think. And while Mrs Leith Leamington was sipping her cocoa as the maid took down her hair, and thinking in a pleased way over this final blow she meditated to Mrs Flushton's fond and tender

hopes, May, the unconscious instrument of her revenge, was weeping bitterly up-stairs, her happiness dying with the few remaining cinders. It was impossible to think he cared for her—her, a poor penniless little waif—not even very pretty ; he, who might be anything, do anything ! So clever, so handsome, so talented, so gentlemanly in all he said or thought ! Oh, it was cruel ! But if he did—if he did, it would ruin him. His aunt would be so angry—Mrs Leamington had said— And then May sat and thought a little longer, and made a firm resolve that kept her awake all night.

THE TREATMENT OF WATCHES.

Views as to the proper treatment of watches differ so greatly, and are, moreover, so confused, that a few words of advice from a practical watchmaker are not out of place. A watch, to meet the requirements made upon its capabilities, must in the first place be treated well. When it is considered what continuous care is bestowed upon every steam-engine, how it is watched and guarded night and day, it appears self-evident that a watch, which is, after all, not only an engine, but one of a most delicate and complicated construction, should be carefully and tenderly looked after. Consequently, a watch, even the most perfect one, will satisfy its owner only when it is treated in accordance with its sensitive mechanism, when it is preserved against every kind of concussion, and is kept scrupulously clean. As there is a constant accumulation of dust and fibres from the waistcoat material in the watch-pockets, which penetrates even into the best-closing watches, it is advisable to turn out and clean those pockets frequently.

In order to keep the 'going' of a watch as regular as possible, it should be subjected to regular treatment ; that is to say, it should be wound up always at the same time of day ; and during the time that it is not worn it should either be laid down or hung up regularly, according to habit, as every watch goes differently when it is hanging than either during lying down or wearing. In watches having a double case, that over the watch-glass should never be left open. An attentive observer will find that, if such a watch is left open even for one night, the glass is covered with a thin film of dust, which will gradually enter the works even through the tiniest openings in the case, and thus cause disturbances. People should wind up their watches in the morning, not only because they generally rise more regularly than they go to rest, but also because a spring fully wound up will more readily overcome the disturbances which affect the correct going of a watch during the movement occasioned in wearing it. Springs will not break so easily if the watch is carefully wound up, and is not placed directly out of the warm pocket against a cold wall, or on a still colder marble slab ; and for that reason a protective mat is desirable.

The capacity of a watch, or, more correctly, its keeping correct time, is very much governed by its construction and its more or less perfect finish. It cannot be expected of the best horizontal watch that it should always keep good time, and even less so of the inferior watches which are sold in

large numbers. The changes of the oil, the variations in temperature, the density or humidity of the air—all greatly affect the going of a watch; and it is only the lever watch, of the most perfect finish, which neutralises those adverse influences to the greatest degree. As a matter of fact, no watch keeps perfectly correct time ; and even the best chronometers, used in observatories and on board ship, must be regulated according to tables which fix those variations to which watches are subjected.

A watch should be cleaned every two or, at most, every three years if it is desired to preserve it. In time the oil decomposes, gets mixed with the particles of dust which enter the works even the best-closing watch, begins to act as a grinding material, and wears out the working parts. The best watch will be spoiled in this way, and will never keep such good time as before. It frequently happens that a watch requires cleaning in less time than every two years, according as it closes badly or is exposed to much dust and dirt. Any one having the misfortune to drop his watch into water or any other liquid should take it at once to the watchmaker, to have it taken to pieces and cleaned, for a delay of even an hour might spoil the watch for ever.

WITHOUT—YET WITH.

I STAND beneath the tree where once we stood,
We two, together, sheltering from the rain ;
The flowers are growing, and from out the wood
Comes the soft murmur of the doves' refrain.
Shall we e'er meet again ?

I see the little path where once we strayed,
The path run wild beneath the grasses' sway,
Flecked by sweet sunbeams playing through the glade ;
The steps of two passed over it that day ;
Now one has gone away.

The briar-rose blushing flings its sweets around ;
The bramble, gadding o'er the woodland ways,
Its tender offshoots trails upon the ground,
Or with the graceful bracken gently plays ;
Alone, I stand to gaze.

Yet not alone, for lingering by my side,
Thy spirit maketh beauty seem more fair ;
Above all doubts, thy love shall still abide,
And give me strength that I may bravely bear
My daily weight of care.

M. C. SALMON.

* * TO CONTRIBUTORS.

- 1st. All communications should be addressed to the Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.
- 2d. If its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.
- 3d. To secure their safe return if ineligible, ALL MANUSCRIPTS, whether accompanied by a letter of advice or otherwise, should have the writer's Name and Address written upon them IN FULL.
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